To Whom It May Concern:

I have never written a letter of my own initiative to any government
body until now. I have been in the computer industry since graduating
from college so I have been observing Microsoft's behavior for about
twelve years. I cannot in good conscience allow the proposed
"settlement" to pass without at least voicing my opinion.

I recall a time when there was competition in the PC operating systems
and application software markets. You could use DOS, DR-DOS, OS/2 and
possibly others as your operating system. You could also choose between
WordStar, WordPerfect, and Microsoft Word for your word processor. You
could choose between Lotus 1-2-3, Excel, or Quattro for your
spreadsheet. There was competition. Microsoft has completely annihilated
all competition in those and other markets. I remember Stacker and the
Borland development tools. Unless something is done competition will
never be restored to those markets.

I do not see how the proposed settlement benefits the plaintiffs one
iota. I doubt most of the schools have or can afford the resources to
keep a handful of networked PC's running. I doubt that it will really
cost Microsoft one billion dollars in hard cash to dump a bunch of
outdated PC's and copies of software onto underprivileged schools.

A columnist in InfoWorld suggested something that I believe would truly
restore competition in the PC marketplace. In a nutshell, make the
Windows operating system and the Office platform a public standard or
API which other companies can write operating systems and applications
for. Make it illegal for Microsoft to extend or go beyond the API
without first extending the public definitions as they have done in the
past with the Windows API. This would instantly create two huge markets
that would create jobs, stimulate the economy, and benefit consumers
globally. Of course Microsoft would vehemently object but somehow I
think they will be able to manage. Furthermore if Microsoft's software
is so good they should be able to compete and win on a level playing
field.

Thanks for your time.

John Curren
System Administrator